

ECLIPSE
COMICS

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13

AZTEC ANCE



The PENUMBRA

ECLIPSE COMICS • P. O. BOX 199 • GUERNEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95446

ON THE RACKS



DNAGENTS no. 22
Amber goes to Hawaii to find her genetic mother, while a corporate hitman isn't far behind. In the balance is the secret of the genetic code.

NIGHTMARES no. 1
Dark fantasy by Doug Moench and Don McGregor, all with art by Paul Gulacy. "Blood on Black Satin" and "The Trespasser" begin in this issue.



ZOT! no. 9
Butch takes center stage in "Gorilla Warfare" and leads the fight against religious fanaticism. Plus, a new feature: full-page character pin-ups!

SUN-RUNNERS no. 5
Delphi lies critically injured on the brink of death, as Mark and Scooter desperately search the cosmos for the only one who can possibly save her!



CROSSFIRE no. 11
The most offbeat tale yet! If you've ever wondered why TV versions of comics are so... different, then you can't afford to miss "Screenplay."

NIGHTMARES no. 2
The conclusion of the Micro-Series featuring all Paul Gulacy art. The finish of "The Trespasser" (by McGregor), and "Blood on Black Satin" (by Moench).



PRESSBUTTON no. 5
In "Slaves of the Narco Pollen," ant-like aliens capture a drunken Pressbutton. Plus, in the second story, the incredible origin of Pressbutton!

FIT TO PRINT

Today I read something in The Comics Buyer's Guide No. 597 that shocked me. Two different people had written in to CBG to complain that the letters of comment they had sent to Marvel Comics had been printed with their criticisms deleted and new words added that expressed opinions contrary to what they had actually written.

Rick Brown of High Point, North Carolina said that his letter to Micro-nauts was tampered with so much that it concluded with an opinion he "never wrote and... never believed."

Adrian E. Mazar of Bushnell, Illinois called Marvel's re-write of his critical letter to Spider-Man "a bastardized contrivance full of praise" for an artist he had actually called an imitator of styles copied from his forerunner on the series.

Mazar's letter to CBG concluded with a question about the re-writing of letters. "Is this practice widespread throughout the industry?"

The reply to his query, by the CBG editorial staff, was interesting because in it Don Thompson recalled that a letter he had written to EC Comics in the 1950s had been switched from one book to another, and the praise it contained was transferred to another story, one he did NOT like. And, Don noted, he was still angry about this misuse of his feedback, over thirty years later!

I don't blame Don Thompson for still being mad. I would be too, if it had happened to me. And I don't think Rick Brown or Adrian Mazar should be any less ticked off. We are only known to others by our actions and the words we speak. If someone tampers with our words, they are committing an outrage against our persons.

Now I don't know about the current policies regarding the re-writing of letters of comment at the other comics companies. (I do know that when I used to write regularly to Marvel and DC in the late 1970s my letters were either run intact or simply shortened to save space. But that was several editors ago, and it seems the policy may have changed, at least on certain titles.)

However, I do know that I would not waste my time sending letters to

any outfit that rewrites critical analyses into unqualified praise. I mean, if they want to talk to themselves about how great they are, let THEM spend the money on the postage.

All of which brings us to the here and now. First off, we at Eclipse do not re-write letters of comment, and we never will. We DO fix up spelling mistakes, and we sometimes have to shorten letters for space considerations, but we have NEVER added new sentences to a letter or replaced criticism with praise.

As some of you know, both Dean and I were prolific letterhacks in the days before we became professionals. I still enjoy the lettercols a whole lot. In fact, reading the fan mail is one of the high points of my busy day. And believe me, I read every single letter. I sometimes even add my own marginal comments before they are forwarded to the creators... stuff like "My theory exactly!" or "Oh well, ya can't win 'em all..."

So go ahead, write Eclipse a letter and make my day! Even though I can't promise we'll run it, you never know — someday you might find YOUR name in print. And then you'll be glad to know that the words ABOVE your name will be all your own. That's a promise.

catherine yronwode

IN YOUR HANDS

San Francisco police detective Lou Kinsolving is hung up on Bridget, whose dead body (her OTHER body, actually) he found in a sewer. Instead of chasing criminals, he's tracing a ghost... while Aztec Ace is left with no choice but to don a super-hero costume, 1940 style!

WRITER:
DOUG
MOENCH

PENCILS:
DAN
DAY

INKS:
MIKE
GUSTOVICH

LETTERS:
CARRIE
SPIEGLE

COLORS:
STEVE
OLIFF

"TIME IS WHAT WE
GO THROUGH TO
DIE." -CAZA, 2223

EDITOR:
CAT &
YRONWODE

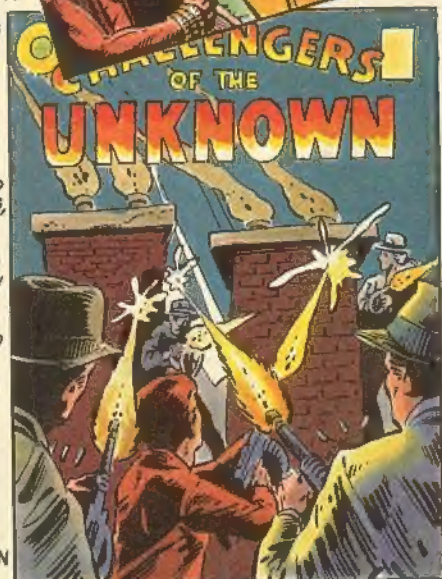
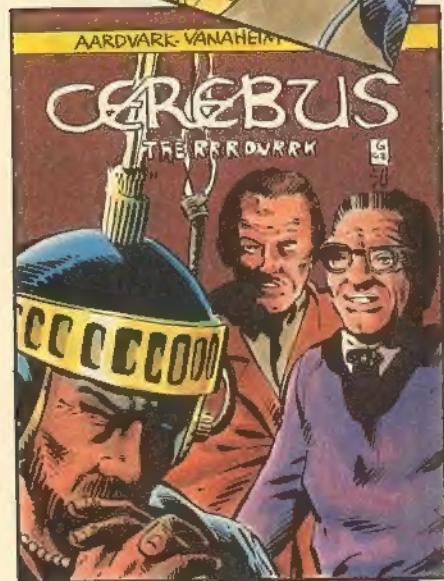
FADING SPIRITS



SORDIDLY, SO
FAR:



THE LAST TRIP HEAD SHOP, RUN BY PUER ARTEMIS CIRCA 1969, IS A FRONT FOR TELE-TEMP UNLIMITED, WHERE A SCORCH RISING FROM SAN FRANCISCO 1940 REVEALED BAD DÖNIE DOIN'S RESULTING FROM BRIDGET'S MURDICE. PUER RAN A RETRO-ALTERNATIVE NEWSREEL THROUGH HIS HEAD, AND IT SEEMED A CERTAIN DETECTIVE LOU KINSOLVING WAS OBSESSED WITH THE MYSTERY OF A DEAD DAME DREGGED FROM THE SEWER. THIS WAS THE SAME COP HISTORY PEGGED AS BUSTING UP AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE STICK TERHUNE AND MUGGSY GRIFFITH MOBS, BUT HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH BRIDGET WOULD NOW ALLOW THE UNIFIED MOBS TO TRASH HISTORY BY TERRORIZING SAN FRAN FOR DECADES TO COME. SO BRIDGET AND I TRIPPED BACK TO SAVE THE LOVESICK DICK FROM A ROOFTOP AMBUSH—AND LATER, STILL POSING AS MEMBERS OF THE TERHUNE MOB, WE SHOT HELL OUT OF MUGGSY GRIFFITH'S APARTMENT. I ALSO SWIPE A STACK OF GOLDEN AGE COMICS ON THE WAY OUT AND, TO FILL TIME AND TIE UP A LOOSE END, TOOK THEM BACK TO MUGGSY'S LEUKEMIC GRANDSON IN 1978. HIS FAVORITE WAS **CRIMSON COMET** #1.



BUT HOWCUM THERE WAS ONLY ONE ISSUE, MR. ZEK?

LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE, DAVID SOME COMICS ARE JUST TOO GOOD TO SURVIVE.

A BIT TIGHT, BRIDGET--MAKING ME WONDER HOW SUPERHEROES DO ALL THAT STRENUOUS STUFF.

MAYBE WE SHOULD'VE JUST PAINTED MY SKIN RED...

JUST LIKE A MAN--I SPEND TWELVE HOURS SEWING THESE DUDS AND ALL YOU DO IS COMPLAIN. HERE, LET ME SNIP THIS LAST THREAD, ACEY-DEUCE, WHILE YOU TELL ME WHY YOU WANNA LOOK LIKE THIS.

FIRST, I'LL NEED THIS OUTFIT WHEN I GO BACK TO 1978 AGAIN, BUT ASIDE FROM THAT...

CRIMSON COMET
SEAMSTRESS OF THE SUDES

...LOU KINSOLVING IS STILL DISTRACTED BY THE MYSTERY OF YOUR DEATH, PERHAPS MORE THAN EVER.

AND THE GRIFFITH AND TERHUNE MOBS MAY BE SHAKEN, BUT THEY'RE STILL INTACT.

HOW DO I LOOK?

HOOO...

SO I'VE STILL GOT TO PREVENT THE TWO GANGS FROM JOINING FORCES--

--WHILE YOU'VE GOT TO CONVINCE KINSOLVING TO BURY HIS OBSESSION WITH YOUR DEATH...

SAN FRANCISCO 1940, CAZA; READY FOR DEBARKING.

...WHICH IS WHY WE'RE GOING BACK AGAIN, YOU AS A GHOST...

...AND ME AS A SUPERHERO.

MY OWN HANDIWORK OR NOT, DO YOU REALIZE HOW RIDICULOUS YOU LOOK?

NOT AT ALL, MY DEAR--IF I CAN'T WEAR AN OUTFIT LIKE THIS IN 1940, OF ALL YEARS, WHEN CAN I?

HAPPY HAUNTING, SPOOK.

YEAH--AND HAPPY HEADING TO YOU, CRIMSON COMET.

CLASSIC COMICS
UNCLE TOM'S CABIN
SWISS
JEEZ



NO PLACE IS SAFE!



ALL-FAMOUS
POLICE

THE
HAUNTING
OF LOU
KINSOLVING

I TELL YA, THE
WAY YOU'RE MOONIN'
OVER THAT DEAD
TWIST, LOU--IT AIN'T
HEALTHY.



BUT YOU GOTTA GET YOUR
MIND BACK ON BUSINESS,
LOU! DID YOU EVEN HEAR
WHAT I JUST TOLD YA--?

THE GRIFFITH
AND TERHUNE MOBS
SHOT SHIT OUT OF A
ROOFTOP LAST
NIGHT--



--ONLY
THREE BLOCKS
FROM THIS
STATION!

I HEARD
YOU, FRANK,
AND I TOLD
YOU BEFORE...



I GIVE UP, LOU! YOU WANNA
HAVE A LOVE AFFAIR WITH A
CORPSE, THAT'S YOUR BIZ, BUT
DON'T COME CRYIN' TO ME
AFTER YOU GET KILLED BY ONE
OF THE GRIFFITH OR TERHUNE
GEEKS!



COME TO THINK OF IT,
YOU'D PROBABLY BE HAPPY--
THEN YOU COULD SHACK
UP WITH YOUR BELOVED
BRIDGET KRONOWHOSIS!



WHAT THE --?!

EXCUSE THE
SAWKIN', BABE, BUT
MACKERELS AIN'T SUPPOSED
TO BE THIS HOLY...

SORRY FOR HIDING
BEHIND YOUR FILES, LOU, BUT
WHEN YOU CAME IN WITH
YOUR PARTNER FRANK...

...WELL, LET'S JUST
SAY THIS MUST BE A
VERY PRIVATE
AFFAIR...

...BETWEEN
YOU AND ME AND
NOBODY ELSE BUT OUR
SHADOWS.

Y-YOU
...YOU...
YOU'RE--

THE DAME IN THE PICTURE,
LOU...THE GIRL OF YOUR DREAMS,
BUT I SINCERELY HOPE NOT YOUR
NIGHTMARES.

BRIDGET
KRONOPOLLOUS.

B-BUT--

LISTEN, LOU,
YOU AND ME GOT A
LOT TO DISCUSS, SO
MAYBE WE COULD GO
OUT TOGETHER AND
GRAB SOME DINNER?

YOU...YOU'RE
A GHOST AND
YOU'RE HUNGRY?

RAVENOUS,
LOU.

AND ONCE YOU NOTICE
HOW WARM I AM, MAYBE
YOU'LL STOP FLINCHING
SO MUCH, HUH?

I GOT A
REPUTATION
TO UPHOLD,
Y'KNOW.

CLASSIC COMICS
THE WALKBACK
OF NOIR DAYS
DON'T DROP
FROM THE
EAVES,
COMET

BET I LOOK
SHARP, LINED
BY THE MOON-
LIGHT.



WHEE.

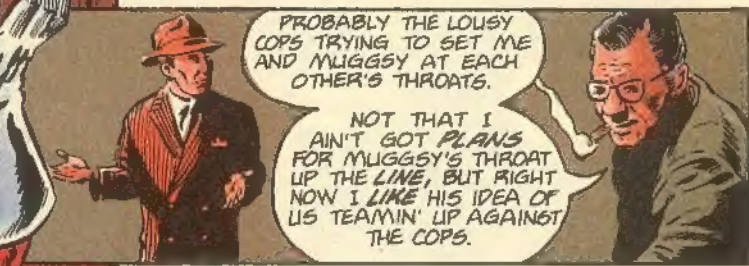
STICK TERHUNE'S
SKYLIGHT.



MUGGSY GRIFFITH THINKS
IT WAS US WHO STOPPED HIM
FROM RUBBIN' OUT THAT
KINSOLVING DICK.

HMM...AND WHO
WERE THE TWO MUGS
WHO BLASTED 'EM,
RICO?

NOBODY KNOWS,
STICK--NOBODY.



PROBABLY THE LOUSY
COPS TRYING TO SET ME
AND MUGGSY AT EACH
OTHER'S THROATS.

NOT THAT I
AIN'T GOT PLANS
FOR MUGGSY'S THROAT
UP THE LINE, BUT RIGHT
NOW I LIKE HIS IDEA OF
US TEAMIN' UP AGAINST
THE COPS.

TAKE TWO BOYS
AND TOOTLE OVER
TO MUGGSY'S
PLACE--TELL HIM
WE HAD NOTHIN'
TO DO WITH THAT
ROOF SCENE...



MAYBE EVEN
SHARP ENOUGH
TO STAR IN A
COMIC BOOK.

SOUNDS LIKE ONE
TOOTLE THAT'D BEST
BE THROTTLED..

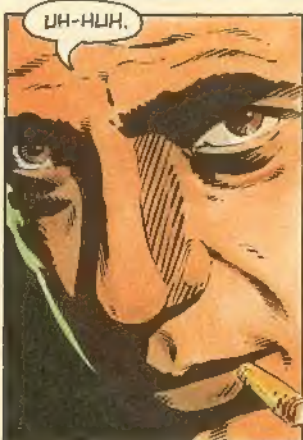
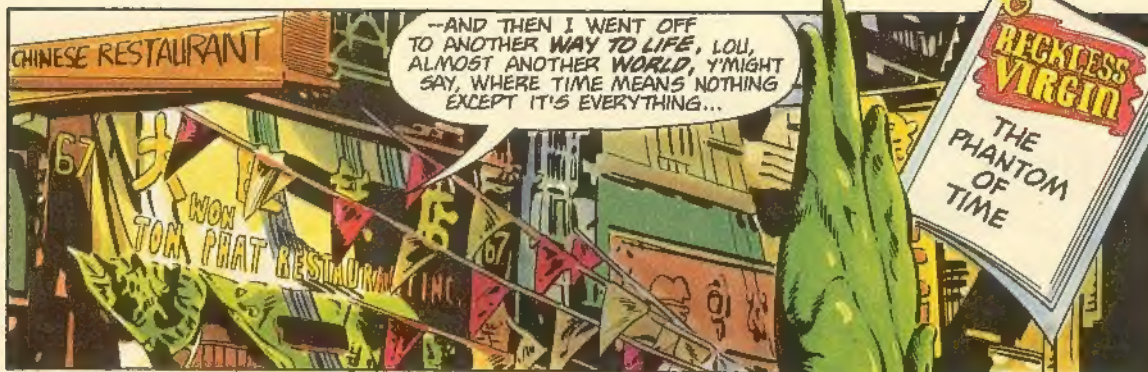


AND DO IT
BEFORE HE GETS
ANY FANCY IDEAS
ABOUT REVENGE.

...BEFORE IT BREAKS
THE PRETTY PICTURE
BRIDGET AND I
RISKED OUR LIVES
TO FRAME.

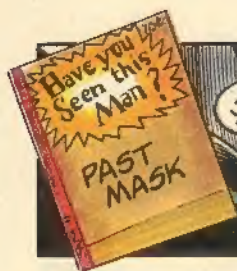


WILL DO,
STICK.



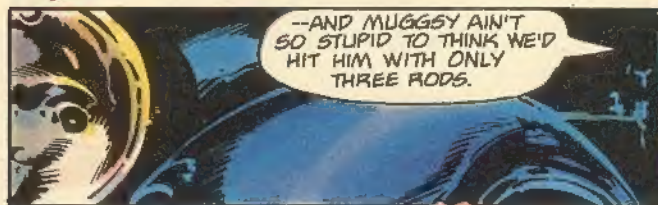
POOR BABY.





RELAX,
YOU TWO.

STICK KNOWS
WHAT HE'S
DOIN'--



--AND MUGGSY AIN'T
SO STUPID TO THINK WE'D
HIT HIM WITH ONLY
THREE RODS.



SHIT, THIS AIN'T
NO SUICIDE MISSION. IF
I THOUGHT MY CHOPS WAS
GONNA GET BUSTED--



ONE--



--TWO--



--THREE--



--AND THE CRIMSON COMET IS
LOOKING TOUGH, NO?

GHOST OR NOT, YOU'RE A WICKED DAME,
BRIDGET KRONOPOLLOUS.

YEAH, BUT EVEN THOUGH
PEOPLE IN, SAY, 1969 THINK
NOTHING OF LICKING EARS IN
PUBLIC, IT'S STILL ALL A
ROSE FOR ME, LOU.

WHICH MAKES IT
BETTER--LIKE GARBO OR
DIETRICH WITH A SENSE
OF HUMOR, WITHOUT
TAKIN' YOURSELF TOO
SERIOUSLY.

SOMETHING
TELLS ME THAT
GLEAM IN YOUR EYE
IS A WARNING
SIGNAL.

DAMN
STRAIGHT, BABE.
FRANK'LL TELL YA
HOW I FELT FOR YOU
BEFORE YOU EVEN
CAME BACK TO LIFE--
LIKE *BRICKS* I FELT,
JUST FROM YOUR
PICTURE...

...AND FROM
SOMETHING ELSE
TOO.. MAYBE, I DUNNO,
LIKE YOUR *SPIRIT*...
REACHING OUT FROM
THE WAY YOU...YOU
DIED IN THAT SEWER,
AND--

WHAT THE HELL
AM I SAYIN'? I'M
ACTIN' LIKE YOU
WERE ACTUALLY
REAL.

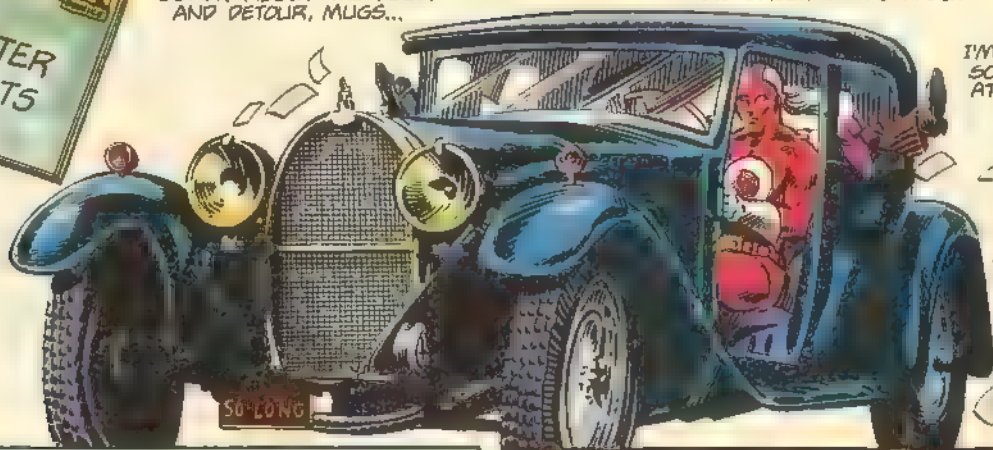
WELL,
THANKS A WHOLE
HEAP, LOU.

NO. 1
CATMAN
FITTER
FRUITS

SORRY ABOUT THE POOR
AND DETOUR, MUGS...

ACTUALLY, THAT'S A LIE.

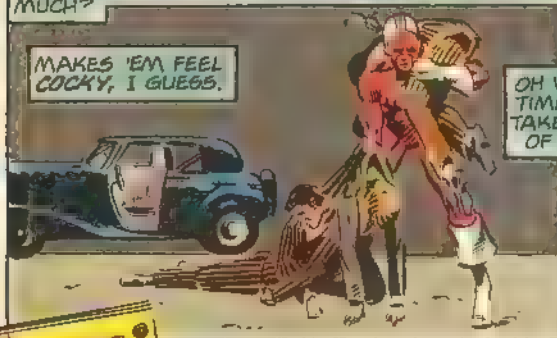
I'M NOT
SORRY
AT ALL.



AND WHY, I WONDER, DO SUPERHEROES LIE SO MUCH?

MAKES 'EM FEEL
COCKY, I GUESS.

OH WELL,
TIME TO
TAKE CARE
OF TB



WONDER HOW BRIDGET'S
MAKING OUT...



RACING
FANTASY

MANY
GHOSTS

NO, LOU,
I'VE NEVER HAD
PLASTIC SURGERY
AND I'M NOT A
TWIN OR A
TRIPLET.

A
QUADRUPLET,
THEN.

WON
N PHAT
RESTAURANT



LOU, I'M
ME, THE ONE
AND ONLY--
ACCEPT IT.

I WANT TO ACCEPT IT--YOU
WALKIN' INTO MY LIFE IS THE
BEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED
SINCE MY WIFE DIED--BUT YA
GOTTA UNDERSTAND, BRIDGET,
I'M A DETECTIVE.

I ACCEPT
NOTHIN' ON
FAITH



DINING
DANCING

HOTEL
ESPANA

CAFE

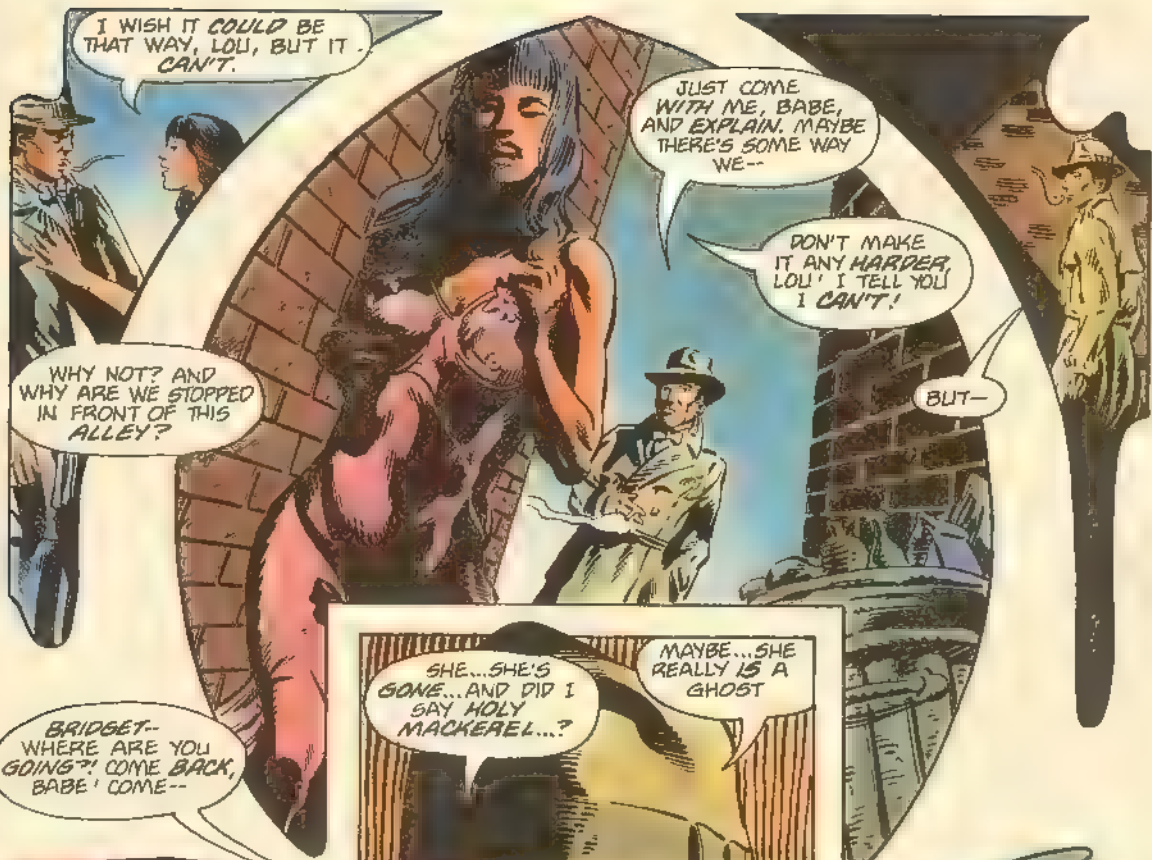
HOBBY

LOU, I JUST
DON'T KNOW HOW TO
CONVINCE YOU--



EASY--COME BACK TO
THE STATION AND TELL ME
MORE--DOPE IT OUT IN TERMS
I CAN ACCEPT, AND THEN I'LL
DROP IT AND WE CAN BE
TOGETHER AND--

NO, LOU.



I WISH IT COULD BE THAT WAY, LOU, BUT IT CAN'T.

JUST COME WITH ME, BABE, AND EXPLAIN. MAYBE THERE'S SOME WAY WE--

DON'T MAKE IT ANY HARDER, LOU! I TELL YOU I CAN'T!

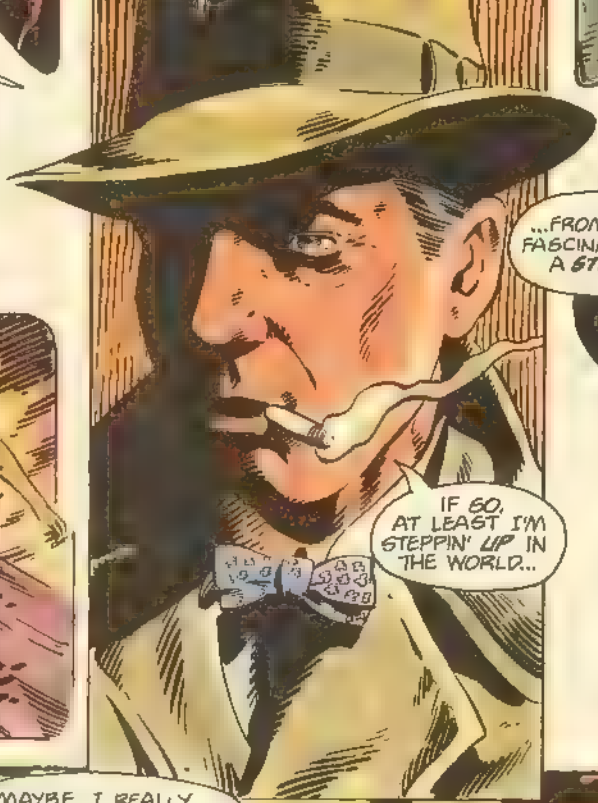
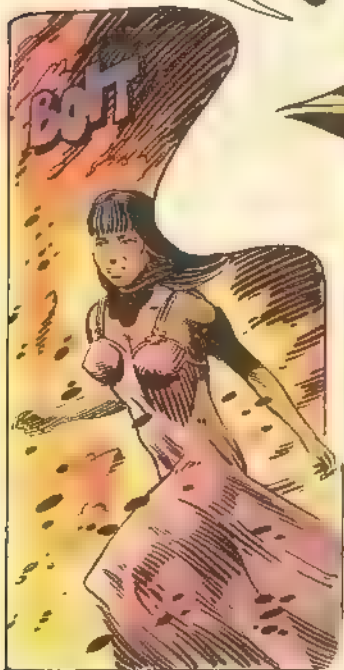
BUT--

WHY NOT? AND WHY ARE WE STOPPED IN FRONT OF THIS ALLEY?

BRIDGET-- WHERE ARE YOU GOING? COME BACK, BABE! COME--

SHE...SHE'S GONE...AND DID I SAY HOLY MACKEREL...?

MAYBE...SHE REALLY IS A GHOST

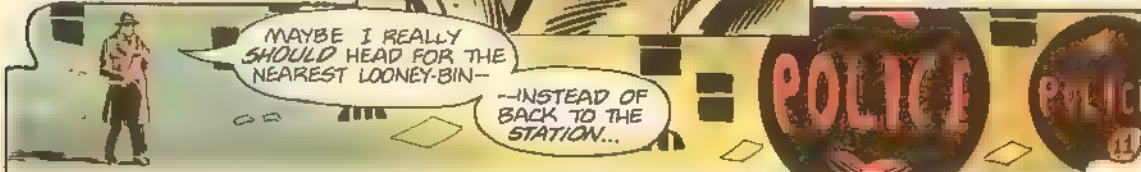


...FROM BEIN' FASCINATED BY A STIFF...

IF SO, AT LEAST I'M STEPPIN' UP IN THE WORLD...



...TO FAWNIN' OVER A SPOOK.

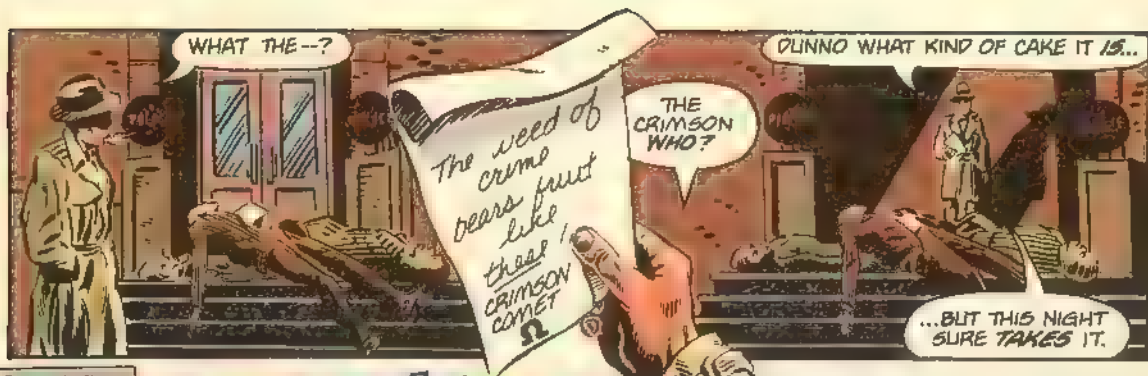


MAYBE I REALLY SHOULD HEAD FOR THE NEAREST LOONEY-BIN--

--INSTEAD OF BACK TO THE STATION...

POLICE

POLICE

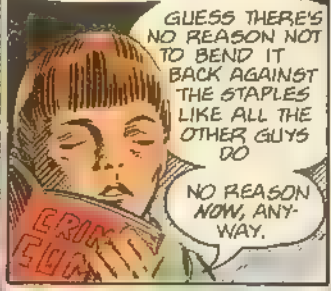


TOURNAMENT
FIVE
FOUR COLORS
FADE TO
BLACK

WONDER WHY I
LOVE THIS COMIC SO
MUCH...MAYBE 'CAUSE
IT'S A GOLDEN AGER
FROM 1940 AND A
NUMBER ONE...

OR MAYBE 'CAUSE I
WISH I COULD BE LIKE
THE CRIMSON COMET,
STRONG ENOUGH TO
DO ANYTHING—

—INSTEAD OF A KID DYING
OF SOME STUPID DISEASE
OF THE BLOOD.



GUESS THERE'S
NO REASON NOT
TO BEND IT
BACK AGAINST
THE STAPLES
LIKE ALL THE
OTHER GUYS
DO

NO REASON
NOW, ANY-
WAY.

BUT I CAN'T HELP
BEING CAREFUL WITH THIS
COMIC... SOMETHING ABOUT
IT... THE SMELL OF THE INK,
THE FEEL OF THE PAPER...

IT SEEMS SO
OLD, BUT BRAND
NEW AT THE SAME
TIME.

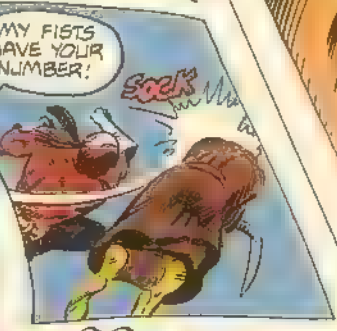
THE COLORS
SO BRIGHT...

AND THE COMET
HIMSELF...MAN, HE
COULD BEAT
ANYBODY...

CRIMSON COMET



YOUR
TIME IS UP,
DEATH!



MY FISTS
HAVE YOUR
NUMBER!

SOCK



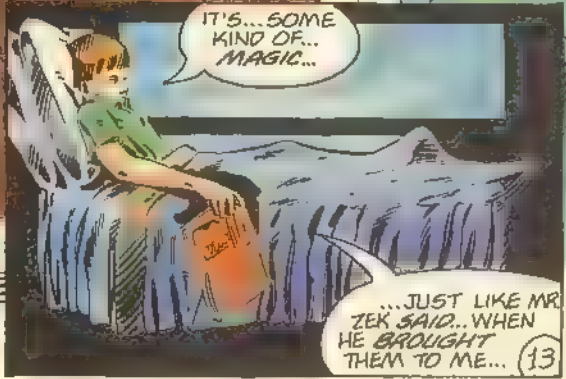
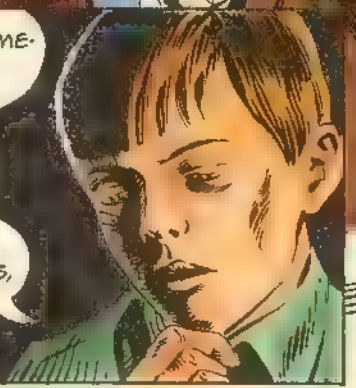
DIE, GRIM
REAPER!

POW

THESE GOLDEN
AGERS HAVE SOME-
THING THE NEW
ONES JUST
DON'T...

...AND IT'S
NOT JUST THE
DIFFERENT FEEL
AND SMELL...

...NOT JUST
MORE PAGES
AND FEATURES,
EITHER...

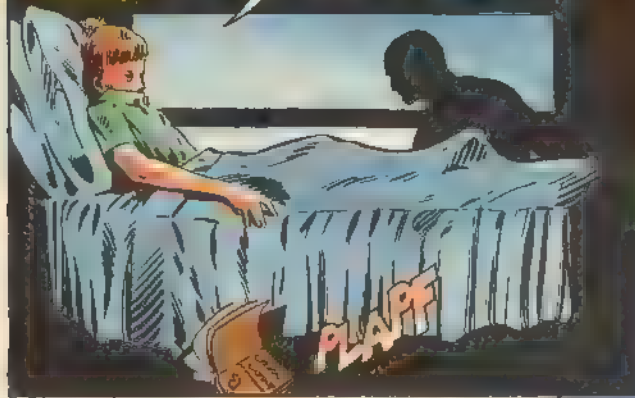


IT'S...SOME
KIND OF...
MAGIC...

...JUST LIKE MR
ZEK SAID...WHEN
HE BROUGHT
THEM TO ME... (13)

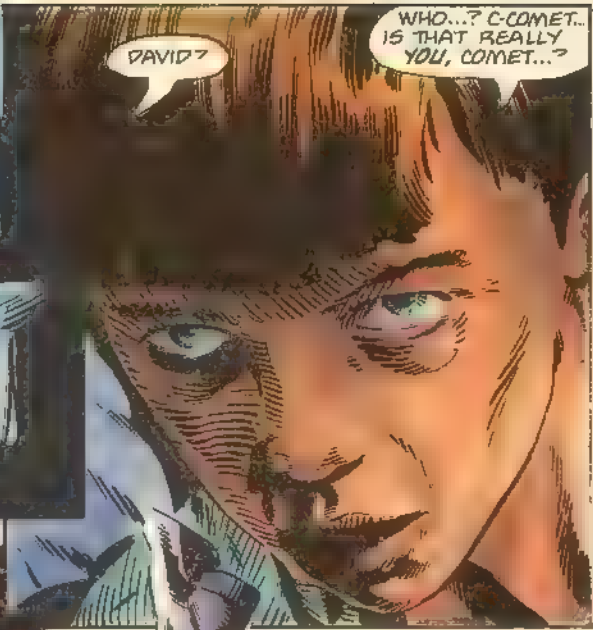
DINNER
SALVING
KIN

...AND I JUST
WISH... THE MAGIC
COULD LASST...



DAVID?

WHO...? C-COMET..
IS THAT REALLY
YOU, COMET...?



NEARLY DRY,
I MAKE MY
ENTRANCE

YES,
DAVID.



COMET, I... I
WAS JUST **READING**
ABOUT YOU... IN ONE OF
THE COMICS MR ZEK
BROUGHT... FROM MY
GRANDFATHER...

THEY... THEY CALLED
HIM "MUGGSY," COMET..
BUT HE... HE WASN'T
REALLY BAD, WAS HE?



I THINK IT'S
TIME TO LET ALL THE
STRENGTH OF YOUR BODY
FLOW BACK INTO YOUR
SPIRIT.

IN FACT, IT'S TIME
FOR YOU TO JOIN ME...
AND ALL THE OTHER HEROES
WHO WERE TOO GOOD
TO SUCCEED.

NO, DAVID...
YOUR GRANDFATHER
WASN'T BAD.

AND SUPERHEROES AREN'T THE ONLY
ONES WHO LIE.



I...I KNEW
HE COULDN'T BE
BAD, COMET...

...BUT
YOU KNOW
WHAT?

...GOODBYE,
COMET...

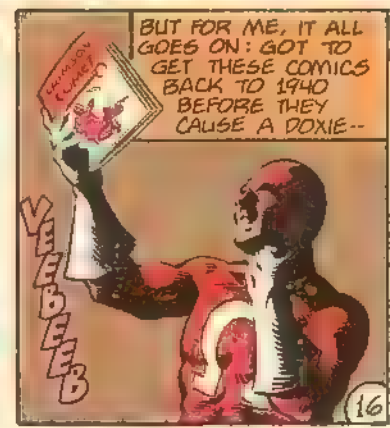
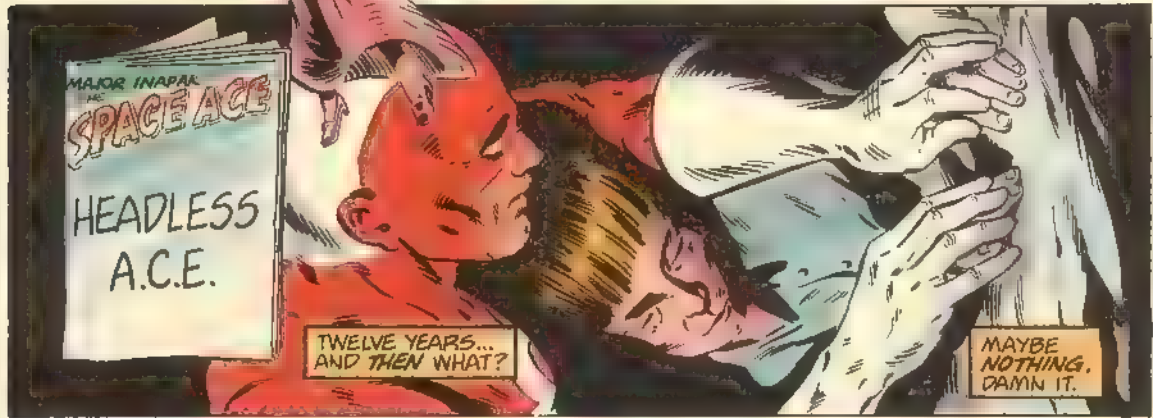
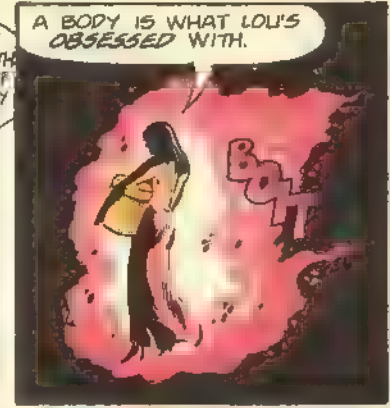
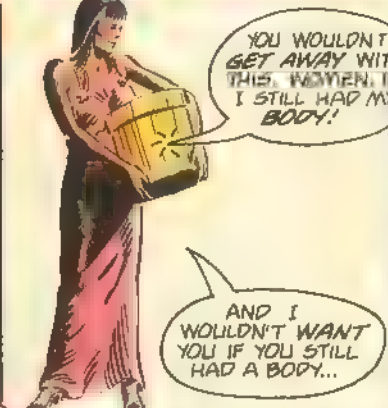
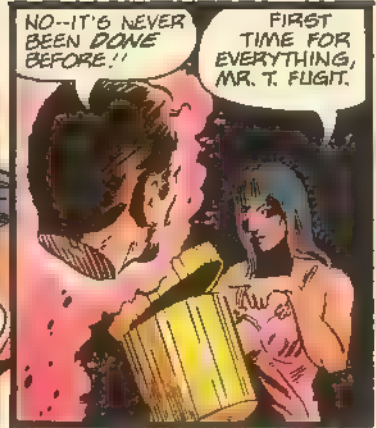
...NOT IF
HE LIKED YOUR
EXPLOITS...

ALL THE COLORS...
THEY'RE GOING BLACK
...AND I THINK...I
THINK...IT'S...

...G-GOODBYE
...DAD...

AND HELD IN THE ARMS
OF HIS HERO, HIS HELPLESS
HERO WHO CAN HOLD NO
TIGHTER...

TWELVE YEARS
OF LIFE SLIP
AWAY
FOREVER



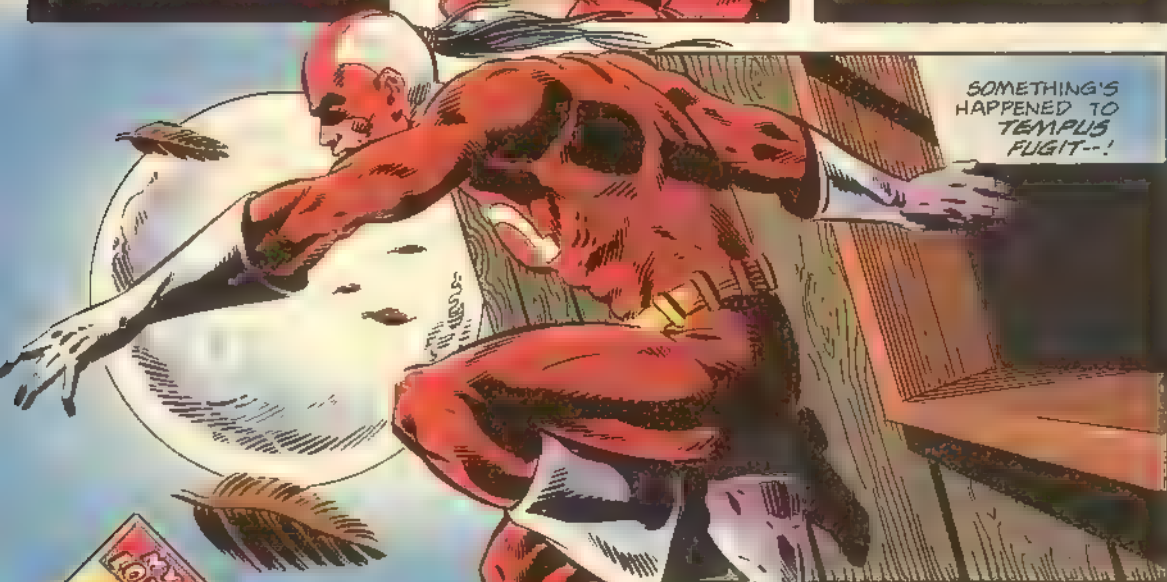
THE SCRAMBACK'S AUTO-
MATIC ALARM--

VEEBEEBEEB

--SIGNALLING THAT THE
AZURE CROSSTIME EXPRESS
IS UNOCCUPIED!

VEEBEEBEEB

TO HELL WITH THE
COMIC BOOKS



SOMETHING'S
HAPPENED TO
TEMPUS
FUGIT--!

MY LOVE
SOLVING
KIN

TOK
TOK
TOK

SHOULD
I ANSWER
IT?

LOT OF TROUBLE,
WHEN I COULD JUST
SIT HERE.

BUT WHAT THE
HELL, WHAT'VE I GOT
TO LOSE?

IF IT AIN'T FRANK,
IT'S NOBODY MORE IM-
PORTANT THAN FU MANCHU
OR THE FIFTH HORSEMAN,
MAYBE THE GHOST OF LITTLE
CAESAR. OR MAYBE--

HELLO, LOU. I'VE COME
TO TRY AGAIN

BRIDGET.
IT'S REALLY
YOU? I... I MEAN,
COME IN,
BABE.

BUY A
HAT?

SORRY THE
JOINT IS SUCH
A MESS.

CAN I, UH,
GET YOU A
DRINK?

SIT
DOWN.

JEEZ, BABE, I'M
REALLY GLAD YOU
DECIDED TO COME
BACK AND--

PLEASE, LOU--STOP
RIGHT THERE I REALLY
WISH I COULD LET YOU
LOVE ME. BUT IT JUST
CAN'T BE.

LOOK,
YOU ALREADY
KNOW THERE'S
SOMETHING VERY
OFFKEY ABOUT
ME, LOU.

I'M DEAD YET
I'M ALIVE YET I'M NOT
A GHOST THE WAY YOU
KNOW GHOSTS...AND
I REALIZE YOU'RE
A DICK TRAINED
TO SOLVE SUCH
MYSTERIES.

BUT I ALSO
REALIZE SOMETHING
YOU DON'T--YOU THINK
YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME,
BUT WHAT YOU REALLY
ARE IS OBSESSED WITH
MY MYSTERY.

OH SURE, YOU
FEEL FOR THE POOR
DAME WHO GOT HERSELF
SHOT IN THE SEWER, BUT
IT AIN'T LOVE, LOU--
TRUST ME.

SO I CAME ONE LAST TIME TO CUT
A DEAL. IF I PRODUCE SOMETHING TO
CONVINCE YOU I'M PERFECTLY ALL
RIGHT, NOT REALLY A GHOST--

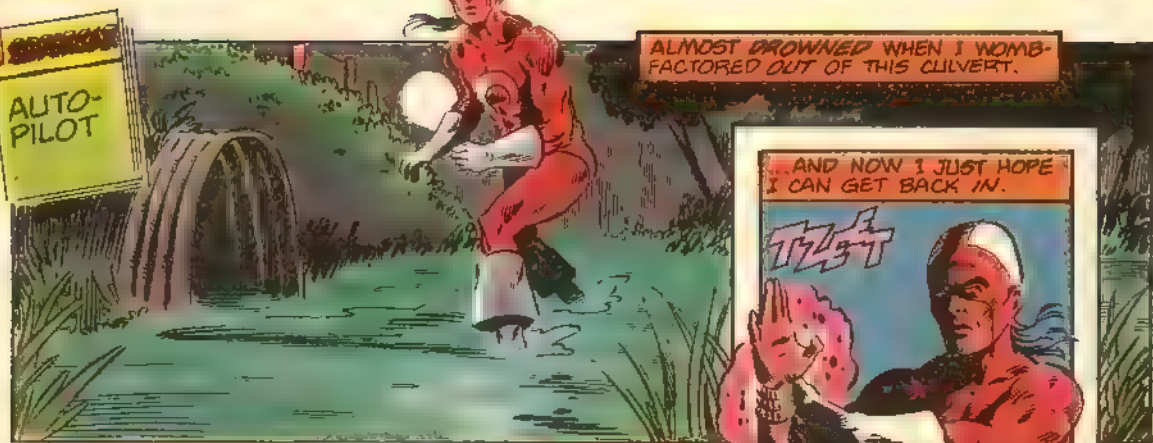
--BUT MIXED UP
IN SOMETHING SO
WEIRD YOU CAN'T
HOPE TO UNDER-
STAND IT..

YEAH?

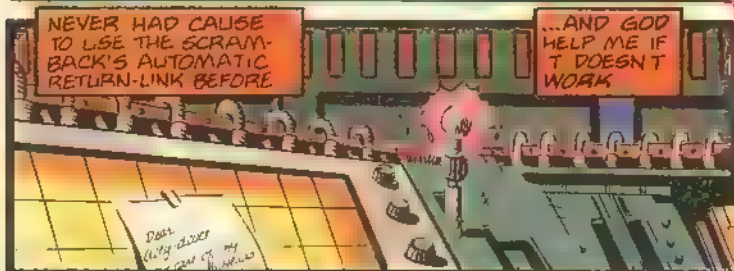
..WILL YOU AGREE
TO RELEASE MY POOR
STIFF FROM THE MORGUE
--AND BURY YOUR
OBSESSION WITH IT?

WELL, I...I
DUNNO, BRIDGET..
GUESS I'D HAVE TO SEE
WHATEVER IT IS YOU'VE
GOT TO--

ALL RIGHT,
LOU, BUT REMEMBER
--YOU ASKED
FOR IT.



ALMOST DROWNED WHEN I WOMB-FACTORED OUT OF THIS CULVERT.



NEVER HAD CAUSE TO USE THE SCRAM-BACK'S AUTOMATIC RETURN-LINK BEFORE.

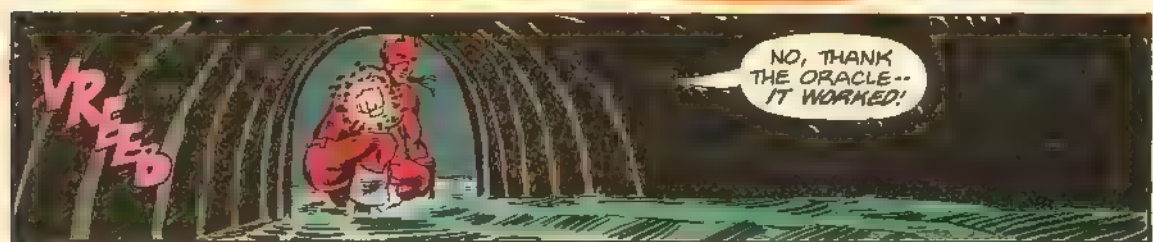
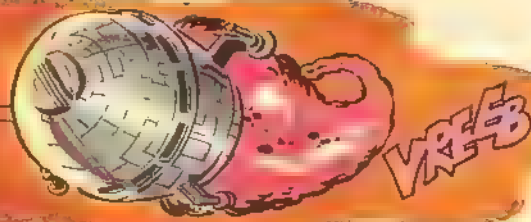
...AND GOD HELP ME IF IT DOESN'T WORK

Dear Wily...
I hope you're
well...



...AND NOW I JUST HOPE I CAN GET BACK IN.

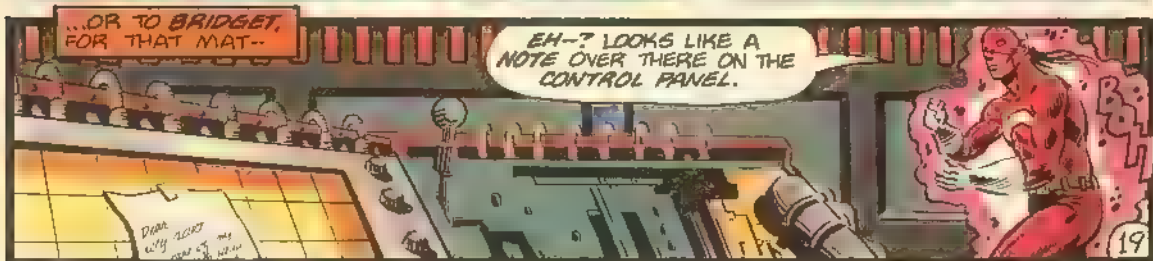
...BECAUSE BEING STRANDED AS THE CRIMSON COMET IN 1978 IS NOT MY IDEA OF--



NO, THANK THE ORACLE-- IT WORKED!



BUT I STILL CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT HAPPENED TO HEAD..



...OR TO BRIDGET, FOR THAT MAT--

EH--? LOOKS LIKE A NOTE OVER THERE ON THE CONTROL PANEL.

Dear Wily...
I hope you're
well...

WHAT THE--?

Dear Acey-devo,
Taking care of my business with Head's help. You finish up with Muggsy and the boys Budget

BUT AS LONG AS MUGGSY STRIKES BACK AT STICK TERHUNE'S MOB, STARTING A WAR DESTRUCTIVE TO BOTH GANGS, MY WORKS ALREADY FINISHED.

STILL, I'VE GOT TO TAKE THE A.C.E. BACK TO '40 ANYWAY, SO BRIDGET AND HEAD CAN BOIT BACK ABOARD...

...AND IT WOULDN'T HURT TO GIVE MUGGSY ONE LAST NUDGE--ESPECIALLY AFTER HOLDING DAVID LIKE THAT...

LOVER'S NAME:
MEIN GHOST!

I HATE TO BE SO BRUTAL ABOUT IT, LOU, BUT YOU'RE A STUBBORN MAN, AND I'VE GOT TO PROVE THAT YOU AND ME CAN NEVER SHARE THE SAME LIFE--OR, EVEN THE SAME WORLD.

READY?

LONG AS YOU AIN'T FIXIN' TO SPRING ANY SNAKES ON ME, BABE ...LET 'ER RIP...

DER VERDAMTE JACK-IN-DE-BOX I AM NOT!

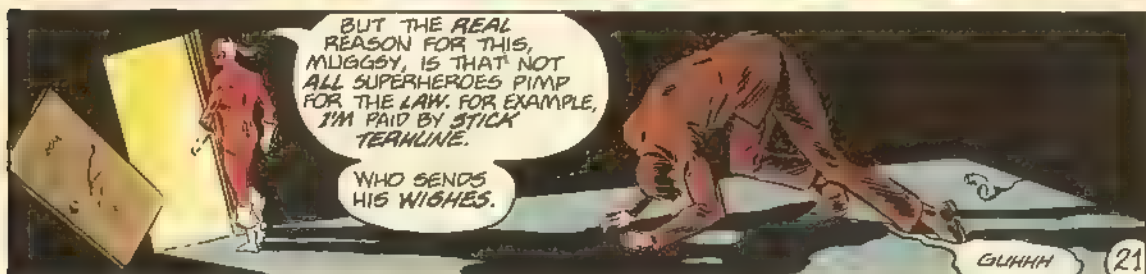
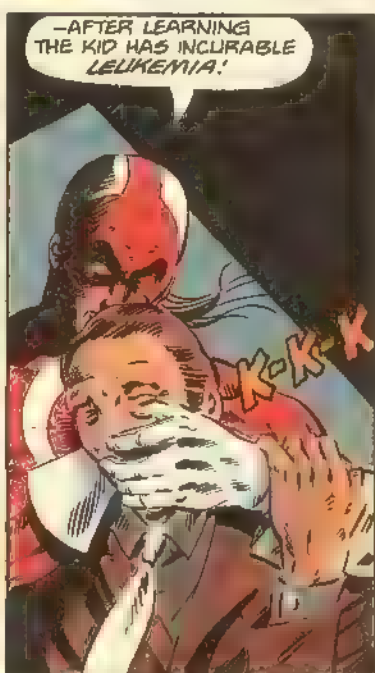
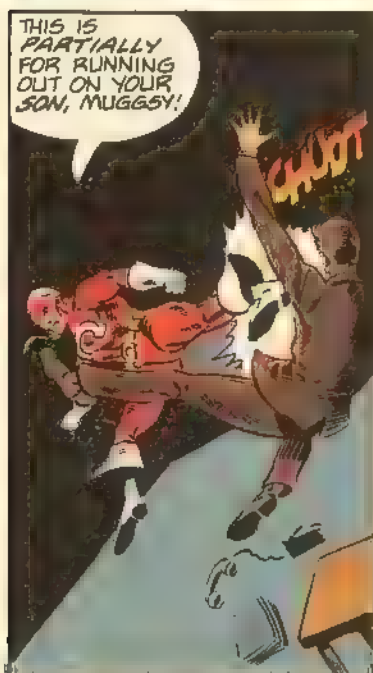
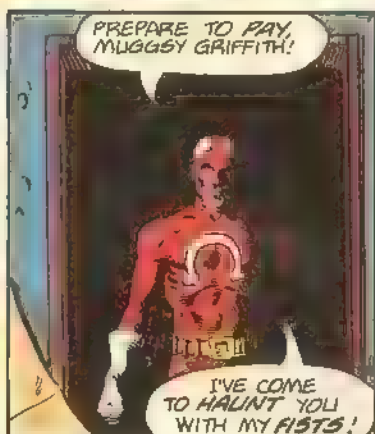
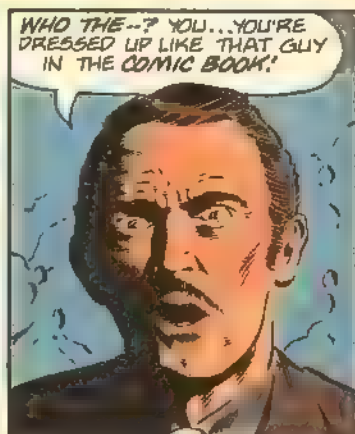
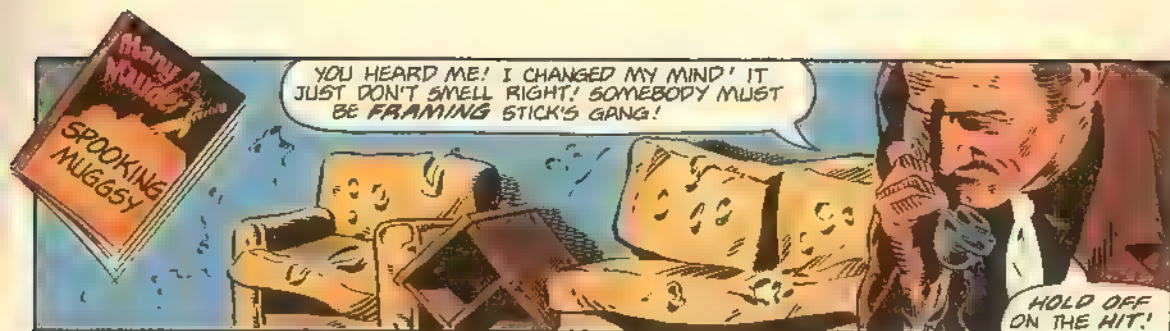
TUT TUT, HEAD, YOU'RE SLIPPING INTO YOUR FREID IDIOM.

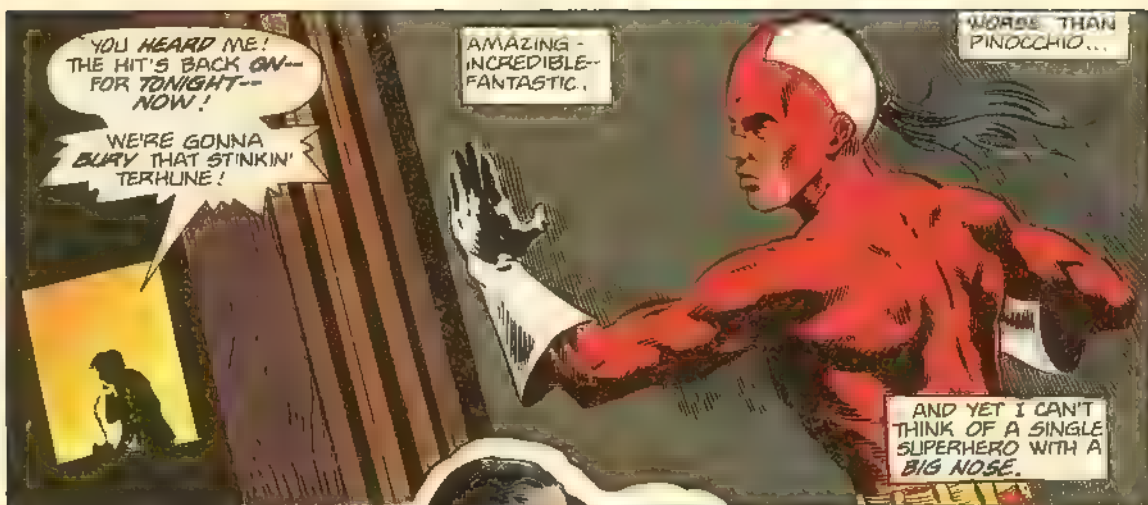
HOLY...

...MACKEREL!

20

PASS IT THIS WAY WHEN YOU'RE DONE, JA?





YOU HEARD ME!
THE HIT'S BACK ON--
FOR TONIGHT--
NOW!

WE'RE GONNA
BURY THAT STINKIN'
TERHLUNE!

AMAZING -
INCREDIBLE -
FANTASTIC.

WORSE THAN
PINOCCHIO...

AND YET I CAN'T
THINK OF A SINGLE
SUPERHERO WITH A
BIG NOSE.



ALL NEW ST JRE'S
ALL FOR
LOVE

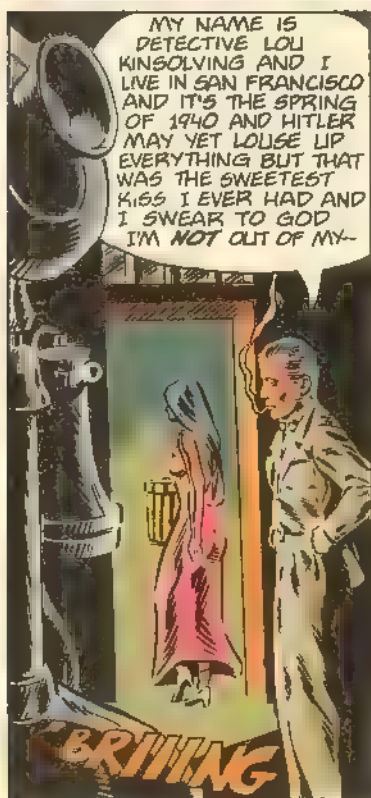
A KISS
IS DUST
O' BRIDGE

BRIDGET...
YOU CONVINCED
ME.

THANKS, LOU...
ANY OTHER TIME,
IT MIGHT'VE BEEN
DIFFERENT.

EITHER I'M SQUIRRELLY OR I'M
WAY IN OVER MY... UH... HEAD ON
THIS ONE--AND EITHER WAY,
I'LL DROP IT.

GOING
DOWN



MY NAME IS
DETECTIVE LOU
KINSOLVING AND I
LIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO
AND IT'S THE SPRING
OF 1940 AND HITLER
MAY YET LOUSE UP
EVERYTHING BUT THAT
WAS THE SWEETEST
KISS I EVER HAD AND
I SWEAR TO GOD
I'M NOT OUT OF MY-

LOU, THIS'S
FRANK DOWN
AT THE STATION.

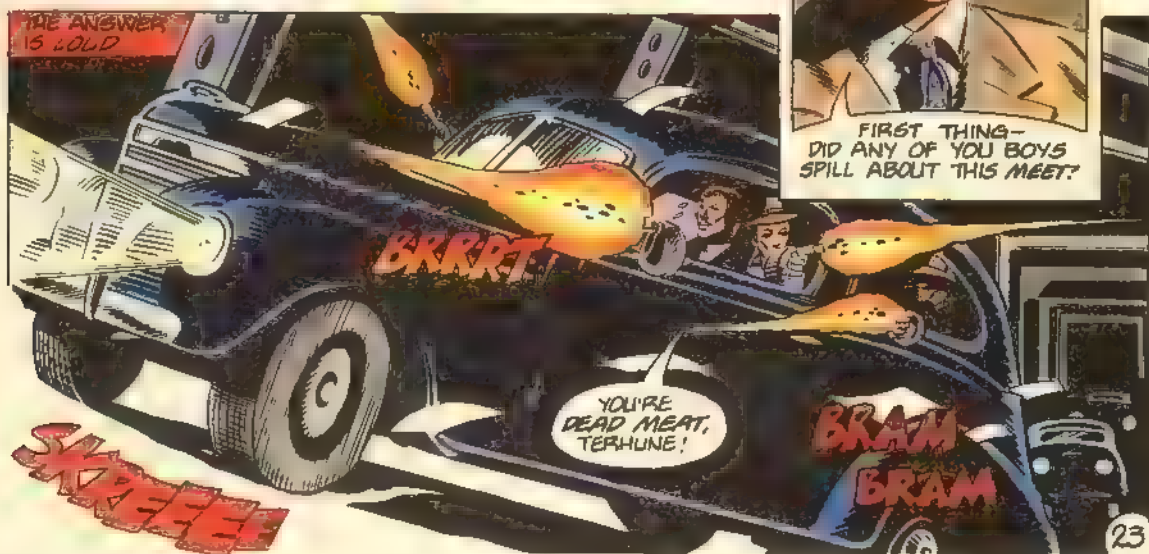
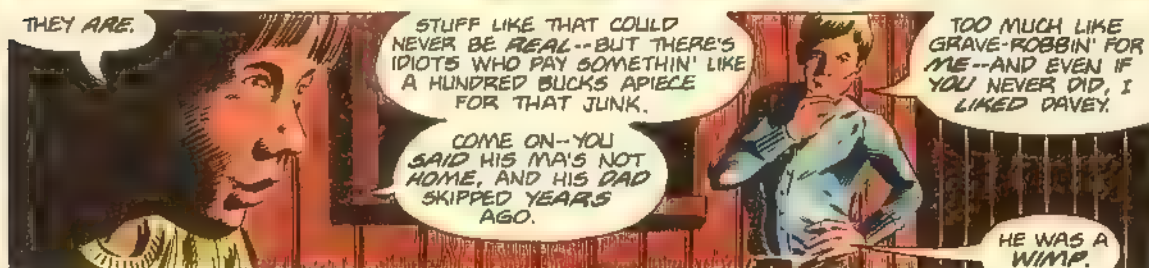
WE JUST GOT
TIPPED THAT THE
GRIFFITH AND
TERHLUNE MOBS ARE
GONNA BLUMP HEADS
-TONIGHT.

YOU READY TO FORGET THAT
DEAD DAME AND GET BACK
TO WORK YET?

YEAH,
FRANK...

YEAH,
I GUESS I
AM.

DAMN IT
TO HELL





LET 'EM HAVE IT,

WE'RE READY FOR 'EM!!

THEY KNEW WE WERE COMING! GOTTA GET OUT BEFORE--

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, MUGGSY!

NOW LET'S SEE...

KINGSOLVING! BUT I THOUGHT YOU--

YOU THOUGHT WRONG, MUGGSY! I'M HERE TO PICK UP THE PIECES-- AND YOU'LL DO FOR A START.

MAYBE I OVERDID IT --KID ALMOST BROKE HIS NECK SCRAMBLING OUT THE WINDOW.

THEN LET'S SPLIT --THIS ROOM DOES ME IN.

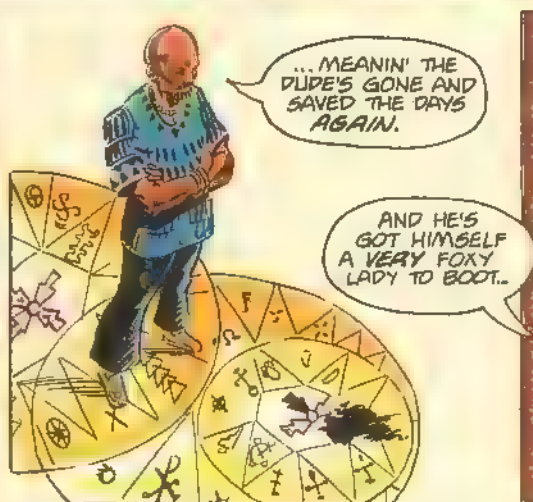
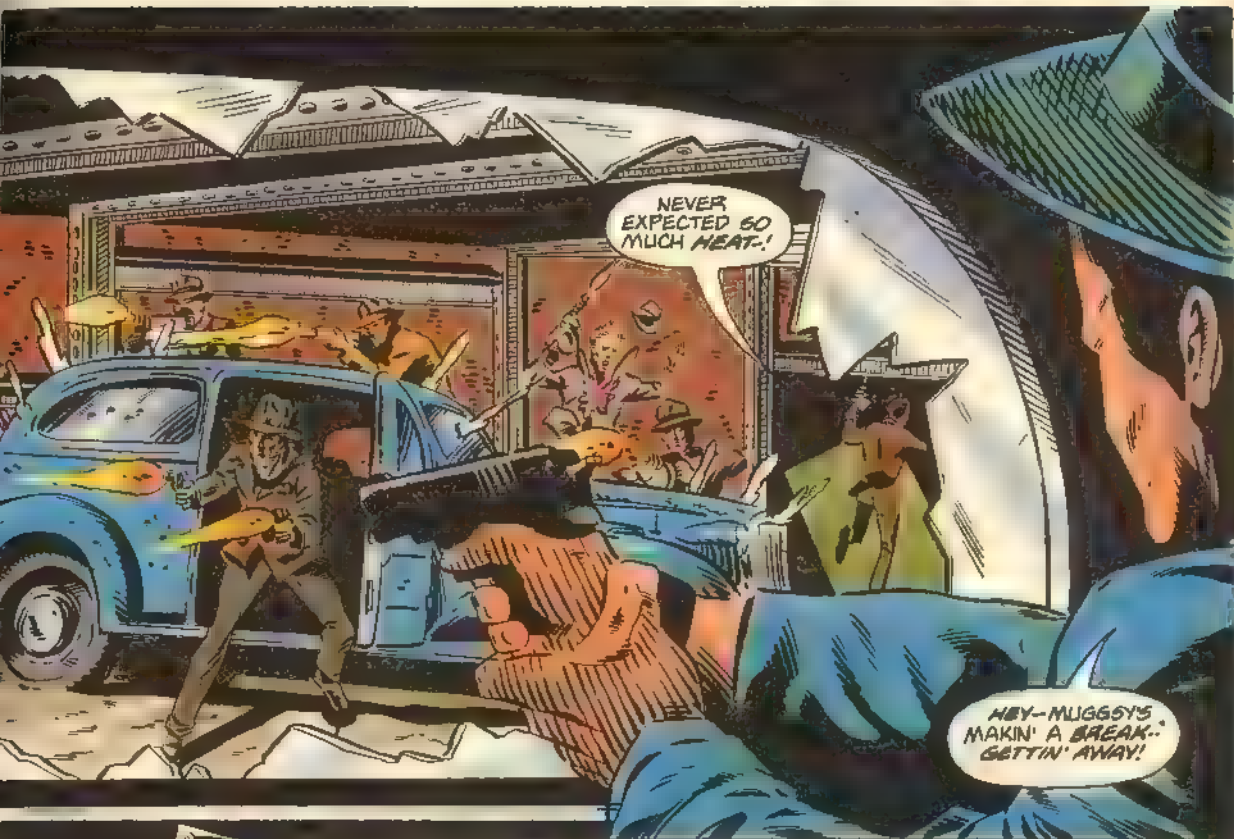
GOTTA ADMIT, I DID A NIFTY JOB ON THAT COSTUME OF YOURS.

BOIT BOIT

THE PINK BANTHER TELE-TEMP UNLTD.

IF YOU'RE TIRED OF TRIPPING WITH ME, I HEAR THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA IS LOOKING FOR A SEAMSTRESS...

I'VE GOT THE COMICS, ACE.





ALL MEANS
OF PASSING TIME,
BRIDGET, BUT ALSO
NOTHING BUT
JUNK.

MAKES A
LOT OF PEOPLE
HAPPY, ACE

ME INCLUDED,
ALTHOUGH I
SUSPECT IT
MERELY BURIES
UNHAPPINESS
UNDER A GAUDY
SPILL

THE ROADS
MUST ROLL
BY ROBERT HEINLEIN
JUNE • 1940

ARE YOU
SAYING THAT ONLY
Highbrow literature
and classical
music--

I DRAW NO
SUCH SUPERFICIAL
DISTINCTIONS--IT'S ALL
JUNK IN THE END

AND HERE'S A
TOAST TO JUNK.

BUT WE BOTH KNOW OUR
HEARTS AND MINDS ARE
ELSEWHERE, AND WILL REMAIN
IN THOSE PLACES FOR SOME
TIME TO COME. SO HERE'S TO
YOU... AND TO DAVID.

THE END

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SUSAN M. MURRIE
San Diego, CA

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MIKE SOPP
Erie, PA

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VAGARIES VIA CRICKLEWOOD

The vagaries of the timestream, and the fact that we get our Eclipse comics over here by sea, conspire to wash up AZTEC ACE 5 and 4 at the same time. But the long wait is paid off in double pleasure. Doug, I've been a fan ever since my first experience with Master of Kung Fu and my subsequent painstaking search for all the back issues of same. You were fortunate to work with a succession of good to great artists on that title and your luck persists on AZTEC ACE with Hernandez and now Dan Day providing the visuals your writing deserves. It is exciting and enthralling to witness your exploration of the potentially limitless ramifications of time travel, all in a truly unique comic which provides this graduate medical student with a more than adequate level of intrigue and complexity. I've just reread the entire series to date and my understanding of the material has improved to the point of nearly total comprehension. The book reads marvelously (no pun intended), and the visuals complement this, right down to the beautiful pastel tones in the coloring.

I still haven't worked out why Bridget has to be murdered, but I'm hoping she won't disappear from the book. And I don't fully understand the five concentric worlds bit either, but I like not understanding. I like the complexity. Indeed, I love the book. And thanks for my name-the-camel prize.

Malcolm Bourne
87, Greenfield Gardens
Cricklewood
London, NW2 1HU

You're welcome, Mal, but listen . . . you got any advice for this lower back pain of mine?

Bridget's murder has been explained (during the last vagary), if not yet Bridget herself. Be patient; time will tell.

The concentric realms of Five-Worlds is a bitch to draw, so blame and pity the poor artists in this respect — but it has been further explained within that selfsame interim vagary of time-by-sea, and satisfactorily, I trust, if only to tantalizing extent. If not, you'll be sure to let us know by issue 23 — at which time you'll be Head Surgeon, no doubt.

POP GOES THE WILSON

I'm a Colin Wilson fan, but for the life of me I can't think of the name of the book originating the quote at the top of page 2 in AZTEC ACE 10. Would you please help?

Gilbert Avila
3520 Benton Street
Santa Clara, CA 95051

Ummmm . . . can't remember which book it was myself, Gilbert, but it must be either *Mind Parasites*, *Philosopher's Stone*, or *Space Vampires* — the only three Colin Wilson books I've read thus far. Sorry I can't pin it down any further at this late date . . .

(Synchronicity: The very guy who taught me how to read is also named Gilbert. Thanks, Dad!)

LUNAR BOP

Woo! You really hit me where I live in issue 9. When I was ten or so (around 1970), I found an old 78 rpm turntable the neighbors had thrown out. Enterprising fellow that I was, I noticed the jack would fit into my clock radio and needless to say, a turntable is a rather dull affair without a record spinning on it, so I raided one of my mother's old albums: *Moonlight Cocktails* by Glenn Miller (with vocals by Ray Eberle and the Modernaires). I knew right away I had something special and must have played that song and the flipside (*It Happened in Hawaii*) 500 times before the disk finally wore out. There are people nowadays who will try to downgrade Miller through comparisons with Herman and Basie, but even if Miller had done only his mellow-dreamy ballads he'd always have a place in my heart for opening my ears to a type of music my generation usually spurns. From what I've read, I suspect Miller the man was rather straitlaced and stuffy, but your portrayal perfectly captured what he should have been and perhaps could have been, given the chance.

Let me second the recommendation of Ian Wallace's "Croyd" books. Most to the point for AZTEC ACE readers is *Pan Sagittarius*.

ACE readers might also be interested in Will Cuppy's *The Decline and Fall of Just About Everybody* filled with the (true) history that's usually omitted from history books. Cuppy's method of preparation was to read everything ever written about each subject and then throw out everything that wasn't obviously ridiculous.

Larry Maddock wrote a time travel series in the 60s called *Agent of T.E.R.R.A.*, reminiscent of ACE in certain ways, but the hero had to face something Ace has yet to confront: Sometimes the bad guys win. For example, Maddock's hero had to ensure that a promising young civilization at the dawn of history died, simply for the reason that it had died in his timeline. I think Ace and Bridget need to face a situation like this, and I suspect that Krok would be only too willing to oblige.

I'm glad that Ace seems to be cured of his mistrust of Bridget; she makes a great angel. But is this episode with *The Devil's Dictionary* in issue 9 supposed to make full sense to us yet? Are we supposed to recognize the man who receives the book? No matter; if you keep produc-

ing issues as good as this, I'll certainly stick around long enough to figure it all out.

Ted Nolan
6536 Brookside Circle
Columbia, SC 29206

Publisher Dino loves Miller & all the other swing bands, Ted, and so do I...but, perversely, only on those chintzy airline earphones between PA & LA. Why, I dunno, but this is a good time to point out the fact that Dan Adkins is a Real Swell Fellow who may change all that. Good-inker Dan recently volunteered to boil down the essence of his truly incredible collection of Oldies, put the residue down on tape, and send it to me. Wow. One or two, maybe even three, 90-minute tapes of everything from Patti Page to Chuck Berry, Elvis, Little Richard, the Exciters, Frankie Lymon, Frankie Laine, and even Doris Day. Well. Forget it. Y'see, Dannyboy is that most obsessive of Obsessive Types: A perfectionist and a "hifi bug." This man did not stop searching until his *thirteenth* pair of speakers. He'll talk atcha for *hours* about ambience expansion, woofers, tweeters, high-bias chrome tape, db's, kilohertz, and everything else only those with superhuman hearing could possibly care about. He's got 600 egg cartons nailed to his walls to soak up and reflect just the right amount of sound. So yesturday he calls me up (many, many moons after his original gracious offer) to say it's done and I'll be receiving *thirty* 90-minute tapes in the mail any day now because he's finally satisfied with the results. The volume has been smoothed out all the way through the tapes (so that songs recorded from old 78s are just as loud as those made from new compact laserdiscs); each song has been individually equalized and noise-reduced, reverb-echo has been added to some ("to fill out and enhance the ambience of primitive recordings with flat response"), and the sequencing of the songs, in the style of a master DJ's punctilious analysis and consideration is both varied and appropriate for the maximum appreciation. "B-B-But, *Dan*," stammers me, "the amount of *work* you went through! And how can *forty-five hours* of music represent only the very best of the classic Oldies???" "You guys," sez he, very calmly, "just don't realize how many Oldies there *are*. I went through one-thousand-six-hundred hours of music to get it down to thirty hours!" Whuff. I guess the lovable lunatic's got a point (making the scope of AZTEC ACE truly terrifying) -- and *that*, folks, is what you call a True Friend Me, I dunno *how* it's possible to repay a favor of this magnitude, but I'm surely looking forward to hearing Vaughn Monroe's equalized, enhanced, and noise-reduced classic recording of *Ghost Riders in the Sky*. Thanks, Danny.

Now then, back to Ted: You're the fifth reader to second the Ian Wallace recommendation, but for some reason...I passed 'em up lasttime I was in NYC's Forbidden Planet bookstore. Had my eyes on the books for a good 17 seconds before marching straight to the cash register without touching a single one. Why? Again, I dunno. Maybe because there were just *so many* of those Croyd books. Maybe because my arms were already loaded down with some ninety bucks worth of other books and comix. Or maybe just because I won't have the time with all the music I've got to listen to. But someday, Wallace, someday... (I already find it sufficiently intriguing that "Pan Sagittarius" reminds me, if only a little, of "Puer Artemis"...)

From the very conception of this series I've had in mind an extremely elaborate (maybe even 3-part) story in which Ace must prevent Krok from preventing JFK's assassination (conspiracy nuts, look out!), so your wish and my plans will probably but only eventually come to fruition. (And if you read issue 8 carefully again, you'll find hints that Krok already *has* succeeded at times -- paradoxically through Ace's very success in opposing him...)

Getting back to issue 9, no, you weren't supposed to recognize the Mysterious Stranger who midnight-picnicked over the first edition of *The Devil's Dictionary* -- but yes, his existence will figure in Things to Come

TOO SHORT FOR A TITLE

I just finished reading AZTEC ACE 6. This book is one of the top two on the stands today. Any chance you can get Mr Chaykin to work with you on an issue or two?

P. Tner
55555 Wissahickon Ave
Phila PA 19144

Yeeps, here we go again. Thanks for the kind words, P.T., but please check out Jan Levy's letter elsewhere in a past lettercol

JACK-IN-THE-BOX?

What's in the box...? Well, Jack gave a big clue when he called it a box of mirrors, so while the exact nature of the box's contents is yet to be revealed, I can make a vague guess. Shakreen's powers are somehow linked to mirrors, as is her very identity, as hinted by Krok. Also, whatever the box holds, it seems to be a possible key to Krok's downfall. So Some essential part of Shakreen herself? Her powers?

Laura L. Bell
Wright 12-306

By now, our notorious rose-hunter knows (along with the rest of us) that while everything she hazards is accurate, the mirror box contained neither Jack nor Shakreen's powers. But what the hey, here's a recap anyway: Krok busted his wife's box and out hopped the bouncing baby; said baby, however, may or may not have derived from Caza's seed.

TIME CHANGES

Just read AZTEC ACE 9 & 10 and after seeing Doug Moench's lettercol instruction to "savor" the "painted" colors, I must write. The color in these two issues looks blander and drabber than that in some of your \$1.50 titles. Looking at some of the back issues, however, the difference is indeed obvious. But if ACE's color stays the way it is now, I'd rather pay a quarter less and get prettier color. And while I'm at it, the inks are no longer up to par. Where's Nestor Redondo?

Bruce Cheeseborough Jr
2950 W 8
Millcreek, PA 16505

Everyone at Eclipse agrees with you, Bruce, and my "instructions to savor the painted colors" were written conterminous with those "better" back issues. Rest assured that things have (or soon will) change. It's still too premature for specifics, but I can promise this much in admittedly vague terms: The future holds new artists in pencils (some pleasant surprises here), inks (here too), and colors (ditto again)...and maybe, just *maybe*, a new format at a lower price. In other words, the only constants thus far for this most scrambled of books are me, editor Cat, and publisher Dean

Meanwhile, I'd like to thank Dan Day for a very nice ten-issue run on AZTEC ACE. Dan is still improving with each job he does and I'm looking forward to future collaborations on other projects.

The same thanks to Nestor Redondo for his fine inking. As for ACE, as parenthetically stated, keep watching these pages for some very pleasant -- perhaps even spectacular -- surprises.

NEXT ISSUE: The return of poor Puer Artemis in an exotic espionage tale leading up to a stunning secret concerning Bridget's past: THE CLEOPATRA EXCHANGE

--Doug



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ARTIST
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ORTIZ
BRINGS NEW
LIFE TO DON
MCGREGOR'S
SWASHBUCKLER
OF THE FUTURE!

IF YOU
HAVEN'T
CHECKED IT
OUT IN A
WHILE! YOU'LL
FIND SOME
INCREDIBLE
THINGS
HAVE
HAPPENED
WHILE
YOU WERE
GONE!

THE BOOK AND
THE MAN --
THEY'RE STILL
ONE OF A KIND!

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